



Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority Board of Directors Special Meeting

October 22, 2025

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Matt Turrentine, *Chair*

John Hamon, *Vice Chair*

Bruce Gibson

Hilary Graves

Shandon-San Juan Water District GSA

City of Paso Robles GSA

County of San Luis Obispo

Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District GSA

Staff:

Claire Collins, Legal Counsel

Taylor Blakslee, PRAGA Interim Administrator

1. Call to Order

Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) Chair Matt Turrentine called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was led by Chair Turrentine.

3. Roll Call

Chair Turrentine introduced the new Director representing Estrella-El Pomar-Creston Water District GSA, Hilary Graves. Mr. Blakslee called roll (shown above).

4. Meeting Protocols

Mr. Blakslee provided an overview of the meeting protocols.

5. General Update from Interim Administrator

Mr. Blakslee reported that the Annual Report Request for Proposal is posted online, and the submission deadline is November 7, 2025.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Murray Powell.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

6. Consent Agenda

Mr. Blakslee reported that the September 24, 2025, board minutes are included in the consent agenda for approval.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: George Tracy, Murray Powell, Greg Grewal.

MOTION

Approve the consent agenda with the suggested revisions to the minutes.

Motion by: Bruce Gibson

Seconded by: John Hamon

Members	Ayes	Noes	Abstain	Recuse
Matt Turrentine (Chair)	X			
John Hamon	X			
Bruce Gibson	X			
Hilary Graves	X			

7. Presentation from Regional Groundwater Stakeholders Group

Mr. Blakslee provided background on the regional groundwater stakeholder group formed after the Proposition 218 protest to discuss governance, funding issues, and trust-building.

Stakeholder Steve Sinton noted that local stakeholder group (including landowners and agricultural representatives) was convened to identify areas of consensus on governance and funding.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Dale Augustine, Greg Grewal, Ann Myrhe, Murray Powell, Darsha Evans.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Director Gibson acknowledged outreach gaps and committed to strengthening engagement. He stressed the need to clearly explain SGMA's legal requirements, basin conditions, and the consequences of State Water Board intervention. He stated that five GSAs exist lawfully and the JPA's role is efficient coordination, not replacing GSAs. He supported small-group outreach, near-term progress on MILR/monitoring/Land IQ, and exploring broader representation without dismantling PRAGA.

Director Graves recommended opening meetings with a brief purpose statement tying every agenda to SGMA, basin conditions, and cost of inaction. She asked for comparative cost snapshots from other basins to show reasonableness and transparency. She supported broader participation through an advisory group and small-group "office hours" to lower barriers to engagement. She clarified her understanding that stakeholders are asking to reform representation.

Director Hamon emphasized PRAGA as the vehicle for local control and warned that inaction risks costlier state control. He urged continued momentum on the MILR program, well monitoring, and using Land IQ data to target solutions. He requested examples from other successful GSAs to adapt proven approaches locally. He said landowners need to see the data and the "why" behind actions.

Chair Turrentine supported establishing a liaison approach to coordinate quickly with staff/legal and the stakeholder group. He emphasized the need to demonstrate tangible near-term progress while structural discussions continue.

Mr. Blakslee confirmed staff would compile examples of other GSA costs, SGMA purpose statements, and state-mandated fee structures, and would coordinate with stakeholder representatives to inform upcoming budget development.

Director Graves asked about the use of subcommittees for additional input.

Legal Counsel Claire Collins explained that standing subcommittees of board members are subject to the Brown Act, while an ad hoc liaison group would allow timely engagement. She recommended designating two board members as liaisons to the stakeholder advisory group, coordinating with the existing agency staff group, and supporting a separate stakeholder advisory group facilitated by Mr. Sinton.

8. Action Items

a. Appoint Hallmark Group as Executive Director through June 30, 2026

Director Gibson reported that ad hoc co-member Director Reaugh had resigned, leaving him as the sole ad-hoc member for executive director recruitment. He recommended directing staff to prepare a contract amendment appointing Hallmark Group as (Interim) Executive Director through end of the fiscal year, aligning final terms with the upcoming budget deliberation.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Murray Powell, Dale Augustine.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

MOTION

Designate Hallmark as Executive Director and extend services through June 30, 2026, via contract amendment.

Legal Counsel Claire Collins recommended deeming Hallmark the Executive Director immediately under the current contract, with a contract extension brought back next meeting through June 30, 2026.

AMENDED MOTION

Deem Hallmark Group as Executive Director under current contract effective immediately and direct staff to return at next board meeting with contract extension through June 30, 2026.

Motion by: Bruce Gibson
Seconded by: John Hamon

Members	Ayes	Noes	Abstain	Recuse
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Matt Turrentine (Chair)	X			
John Hamon	X			
Bruce Gibson	X			
Hilary Graves	X			

b. Approve 2026 Meeting Calendar

Mr. Blakslee reported that the proposed 2026 meeting calendar includes monthly meetings with a combined meeting in November and December.

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Paul Hoover, Murray Powell.

Chair Turrentine closed the floor for public comments.

Board members discussed balancing public convenience, director availability, and room scheduling, with flexibility to adjust start times.

MOTION

Approve 2026 meeting calendar.

Motion by: Bruce Gibson
 Seconded by: John Hamon

Members	Ayes	Noes	Abstain	Recuse
Matt Turrentine (Chair)	X			
John Hamon	X			
Bruce Gibson	X			
Hilary Graves	X			

9. Public Comments – Items not on the Agenda

Chair Turrentine opened the floor for public comments.

Public Comments: Greg Grewal, Dale Augstine, Alan Duckworth, Jesse Trace, Cody Ferguson, Ann Myrhe, Darsha Evans, Murray Powell.

10. Director Comments / Future Agenda

Director Gibson emphasized the request for examples of other GSA plans and practices that are working for Board review.

11. Upcoming Meetings

Mr. Blakslee reported that the next regular meeting is scheduled for November 19, 2025. He added due to conflicts this meeting will likely be cancelled, and a special meeting will be scheduled for early November.

12. Adjourn at 11:51 a.m.

Drafted by: Grace Bianchi, Hallmark Group